

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST REGISTRATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

January 3, 2007 Wednesday
9:30AM – 12:30PM
West End Health Center
1647 E Holt Blvd
Ontario, CA

Members Present:

Ms. Dianne Martinez, REHS, Chairperson, CEHA representative
Ms. Alicia Enriquez, REHS, Secretary, Public Sector – via conference call
Mr. Todd Frantz, REHS, Private Sector
Dr. Dean Kelaita, MD, Health Officer, Calaveras County
Dr. Lal Mian, PhD, REHS University representative, CSU San Bernardino
Mr. Larry Dwoskin, REHS, CCDEH – via conference call

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Members Absent:

Ms. Shelia Reed, MS, Public Member Appointed by the Assembly
Dr. Antonio Machado, PhD, REHS, University representative, CSU Northridge
Mr. Arturo Aguirre, MS, REHS CCDEH

Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program Staff Present:

Mr. Glenn Takeoka, REHS, Chief Environmental Health Services Section,
Executive Officer
Ms. Margaret Blood, REHS, Registration Program Administrator

Guests

Mr. Rob Miller, REHS, San Bernardino County Environmental Health

Opening Remarks

Dianne Martinez, Chairperson

At 9:40 AM Chairperson Martinez asked the committee members to come to order and requested that Glenn Takeoka begin by providing the committee with an update of the CDHS reorganization before the meeting began. At 10:00 Alicia Enriquez phoned in, everyone present introduced themselves and a quorum was established.

Ms. Martinez asked the members to review the minutes from the May 9, 2006 meeting. The minutes were approved with the following corrections: correct member titles and remove “the” from page three line three.

CDHS Program Update

Glenn Takeoka, Executive Officer

Mr. Takeoka described the proposed reorganization of the Department of Health Services into the Department of Public Health and the Department of Health Care Services which will flatten the organizational structure. The full implications and impacts both programmatic and budgetary will take time to realize. Although

the reorganization is supposed to be revenue neutral each new department will have its own infrastructure. An advisory committee on public health issues is also a part of the plan.

Continuing Education Regulations are currently under review by CDHS' legal office and the public comment period is anticipated to start in July or August. The only major revision to the regulation is to remove the named accreditation agencies (CEHA, NEHA and CCDEH) as pre-approved. Any qualified organization that intends to become an accreditation agency will have to apply and meet the standards set forth in the regulations.

Training Plans

Margaret Blood, Program Administrator

Status report on county plans - There are 46 counties and 2 cities that have approved training plans and 12 counties and 2 cities without training programs. All jurisdictions were notified that trainees from counties (or cities) without an approved training plan will not be accepted into the REHS exam as of November 2006. Proof of service was documented by returned receipts for each jurisdiction.

Report on the Training Coordinator workshop, November 8, 2006 – a detailed outline of competencies for each program area is being developed at the workshops. This was the third workshop and it covered basic science and drinking water. We now have covered slightly more than half of the exam content in the comprehensive knowledge and skill outlines. Once the draft outline is reviewed by the training coordinators we will standardize the format and make it available to all training jurisdictions.

Registration Process Subcommittee discussed alternatives to the standard county training program and decided that the statute intended for all trainees to receive at least a portion of their training and experience through a public agency. However, the Registration Process Subcommittee agreed to consider a specific request by a private company that has comprehensive responsibilities such as Disneyland Resorts. In addition to the counties and cities listed San Diego State University and the University of California system-wide have approved training plans.

Curriculum Review

New College of California is a private post-secondary educational institution accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. However, a review of selected science courses in physics and chemistry revealed significantly less instructional hours compared to standard courses with equivalent unit credit. At this time CDHS will not grant credit for New College courses. Credit may be granted in combination with other relevant coursework.

The committee requested that correspondence from Dr. Sandra Donohue, Program Coordinator for California State University Fresno, requesting a waiver

of the CPS Human Resource Services transcript evaluation fee for Option V graduates be reviewed at the Education Subcommittee.

University Degree Programs

The Option V approval for the University of California, Los Angeles is overdue for a review of the environmental health program. In January 2005 CDHS sent a request for a self-study of the university program for review. After considerable phone contacts, a reminder letter was sent in October 2006. To date the university has not responded. Dr. Mian will ask Robert Phalen, environmental health professor at California State University, San Bernardino, to make inquiries regarding whether UCLA has a valid environmental health program and continues to be interested in state approval of their Option V program.

The original approval for the environmental health degree program at California State University, San Bernardino was granted in April 2004 and is due for review this year. Dr. Mian agreed to send the self-study he recently prepared for the National Association of Environmental Health Programs for CDHS review. University programs are reviewed every three years and visited every six years.

Chico State University requested approval for an Option V environmental health degree program. They submitted a self-survey and a proposed curriculum. The Education Subcommittee determined that their proposal was adequate for an Option III or IV but certain improvements were needed to justify full Option V approval. A letter was sent describing the approved curriculum for Option III and IV and the specific requirements to receive Option V approval.

Miscellaneous

For a second year REHS program staff will organize a student forum for the CEHA-AES in Sacramento. This year we are planning on targeting fewer schools and making the event less formal with more networking, one on one and an emphasis on how to get through the application process and how to get a trainee position. We want to advertise the forum by making classroom presentations, posting notices, preparing targeted class announcements, writing articles for school newspapers. We are asking CCDEH to collaborate with us by helping with the planning and outreach efforts. Larry Dwoskin agreed to bring this request to the next CCDEH executive committee meeting in January. Dr. Mian has been asked to assist with the development of a high school academy for Medical and Environmental Health, at Cathedral City High School.

Larry Dwoskin, representing CCDEH, asked the committee to consider a common concern of the county environmental health directors - that there is not an adequate supply of new recruits to replace retiring personnel. County environmental health programs are the largest employers of REHS. He asked if the Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee has a strategic plan in addition to the REHS program strategic plan. He also asked, what is our professional obligation? Does it include promoting and protecting the profession

or solely administering the registration process? Dr Kelaita remarked that in the medical profession the Medical Board enforces the requirements (CMU, fees etc.) for MDs whereas the Medical Associations advocate for doctor's causes and concerns.

Mr. Dwoskin continued by asking the committee, how do we solicit new people into the field? And how do we protect our scope of work? He is glad to be a conduit for an exchange of ideas and concerns between the Committee and CCDEH. Many directors have the perspective that the profession is in crisis both from a lack of competent individuals applying for registration and an erosion of the profession by an increase in environmental health work performed by non-registered individuals. Unfortunately, the State of California employs many persons in environmental health especially in Cal EPA without REHS. Mr. Dwoskin will ask CCDEH for support at their January 10th meeting both for the student forum and pursuing the development of a Public Service Announcement.

Ms. Martinez described the Recruitment and Retention Program at Riverside County Environmental Health Department. They received an award for excellence from CCDEH for their comprehensive approach. The Program identifies problems facing many environmental health departments in filling vacancies and the efforts Riverside County has taken to address these issues. One of the tools used by Riverside and discussed by the committee was a video advertisement developed and presented at local theaters over the summer. It was suggested that staff investigate how Public Service Announcements are aired and if a PSA could be an option for recruitment on a statewide basis. Mr. Frantz suggested that we will need a marketing professional and Mr. Takeoka reminded us that marketing and promoting the profession is beyond the scope of the REHS Program.

At 12:15 Chairperson Martinez asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Mian made the motion and Mr. Frantz seconded it.

submitted by Margaret Blood